FADRC

P780187-0419

December 13, 1978

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Dear Mr. Glickman:

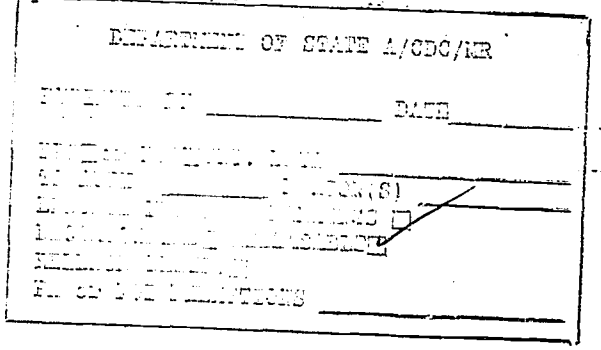
The Secretary has asked me to thank you for your telegram of December 1, 1978 requesting information about the U.S. response to the Guyana tragedy. As you know, the United States Government continues to be involved in this tragic episode and is investigating various aspects of the situation. Nevertheless, I wanted to give you an early response to the questions you have raised concerning this unprecedented matter.

On Sunday, November 19, it had become clear that the United States Government was facing a major crisis in Guyana. An American Congressman and other Americans in his party had been killed. A settlement believed to include over 1,000 Americans was involved, and its situation was uncertain. It was apparent that the Government of Guyana required assistance in handling a major emergency created by the presence of Americans within its borders.

The President, acting under his constitutional authority as Chief Executive and Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces, ordered the departments of our government to take action to deal with this emergency. The operational decisions within the U.S. Government in this unique situation were made by the Secretary of State in conjunction with some of his Cabinet colleagues.

Under the President's Executive authorities, medical evacuation for injured Americans was immediately ordered, and the United States Government offered assistance to the Government of Guyana to prevent further loss of life. As events progressed, it became clear that there were large numbers of Americans dead. For a time, it was believed that there were survivors in the jungle; and the United States adjusted and increased its assistance to help the search by Guyana police and military. Finally, when the full scope of the tragedy of Jonestown was clear, our Government was requested by the Government of Guyana to remove the bodies. This operation was considered essential in handling the emergency situation which existed in Guyana at the time.

The Honorable
Dan Glickman,
House of Representatives.



The Justice Department is fully exploring possible legal remedies which can be used to recover the cost the U.S. Government has incurred in removing and processing the bodies of Americans from Guyana. Now that the emergency is substantially over, the Office of Management and Budget and other agencies are reviewing the various operations to determine the exact cost to the United States Government. Although the costs to the United States Government of an effort of this magnitude obviously are considerable, they are substantially less than the $8 million figure used in some press reports. Please be assured that we will report fully to appropriate congressional committees on these aspects of the operation upon completion of our review. Meanwhile, the Justice Department will make all efforts to recover the costs to the U.S. Government.

If you have any further questions, you may wish to contact Deputy Assistant Secretary John Bushnell. His telephone is 632-8562.

Sincerely,

DB/GW

Douglas J. Bennet, Jr.
Assistant Secretary
for Congressional Relations

ARA/PPC:JSchreiber:mbb # 0180-1573

Clearances: Inter-Agency GW
ARA:GLister BJ
ARA:JBushnell BJ
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WASHINGTON DC
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DEAR MR SECRETARY:
I HAVE BEEN CONTACTED BY SOME OF MY CONSTITUENTS WITH THEIR CONCERNS ABOUT THE COST TO TAXPAYERS OF RETURNING THE BODIES OF AMERICANS WHO DIED IN THE GUYANA TRAGEDY. I AM CONSCIOUS THAT THE JUSTICE DEPARTMENT IS NOW DEALING WITH AN UNPRECEDENTED LEGAL PROBLEM IN ASCERTAINING HOW THE ISSUE OF PAYMENT FOR TRANSPORTING THE BODIES CAN BE RESOLVED.

I AM HOPEFUL THAT YOU WILL ACT EXPEDITIOUSLY IN THIS MATTER AND THAT YOU WILL DO EVERYTHING WITHIN LEGAL AND CONSTITUTIONAL RESTRAINTS, AND WITH COMPASSION, IN ANSWERING THE CONCERNS OF THOSE AMERICANS WHO FEEL THAT THE GOVERNMENT SHOULD RECOUP ANY COST ASSOCIATED WITH THE TRANSPORTATION AND DISPOSITION OF THE BODIES.
SINCERELY,
DAN GLICKMAN CONGRESSMAN FOURTH DISTRICT KANSAS

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WASHINGTON DC
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DEAR MR SECRETARY:
I HAVE BEEN CONTACTED BY SOME OF MY CONSTITUENTS WITH THEIR CONCERNS ABOUT THE COST TO TAXPAYERS OF RETURNING THE BODIES OF AMERICANS WHO DIED IN THE GUYANA TRAGEDY. I AM COGNIZANT THAT THE JUSTICE DEPARTMENT IS NOW DEALING WITH AN UNPRECEDENTED LEGAL PROBLEM IN ASCERTAINING NOW THE ISSUE OF PAYMENT FOR TRANSPORTING THE BODIES MAY BE RESOLVED.

I AM CONFIDENT THAT YOU WILL ACT EXPEDITIOUSLY IN THIS MATTER AND THAT YOU WILL DO EVERYTHING WITHIN LEGAL AND CONSTITUTIONAL RESTRAINTS, AND WITH COMPASSION, IN ANSWERING THE CONCERNS OF THOSE AMERICANS WHO FEEL THAT THE GOVERNMENT SHOULD RECOUP ANY COST ASSOCIATED WITH THE TRANSPORTATION AND DISPOSITION OF THE BODIES.
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ACTION SLIP

UNCLASSIFIED
(Attachment Classification)

S/S CONTROL NUMBER: 7823218

ACTION ASSIGNED TO: ARA

DATE: 12/4

(Action Office Instructions on Reverse)

ACTION REQUESTED

___ STATE TO NSC MEMO
___ STATE TO

___ with Draft reply for signature by _____
___ with Comment or Recommendation

___ DIRECT REPLY

✓ REPLY FOR SIGNATURE BY H- Bennet

___ provide info copy under cover of State-NSC transmittal form
___ provide comeback copy for _____

___ RECOMMENDATION FOR _____
___ with Memorandum for the President

___ APPROPRIATE HANDLING

___ FOR YOUR INFORMATION

DUE IN S/S BY:
CLEAR WITH: D, CA

12/14/78 no clearances necessary per Laurie marks due to multi departmental drafting

REMARKS/SPECIAL INSTRUCTIONS:

Congressional

___ S	___ UNA	___ A	✓ SCA	
✓ D	___ S/AB	___ CU	___ AF	
✓ P	___ S/AR	✓ EB	___ ARA	
___ E	___ S/MS	___ H	___ EA	
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___ TEAM A	___ D/IWY			
___ TEAM B	___ D/LOS			
___ TEAM C	___ M/CT			
___ TEAM D	___ M/DG			
___ S/S-I (RF)	___ M/EEO			
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FROM: KARIN WARPULA (NAME)

S/S-S:

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